

## USGA WEBCAST

### GROOMING WITH A FAIRWAY MOWER

BY BUD WHITE



Circle cutting and direct cross cutting are practical, economical methods to groom fairways and control turf grain.

### RENOVATIONS CAN MAKE YOUR COURSE MORE "USER-FRIENDLY"

Elliott Dowling, agronomist, Mid-Atlantic Region

The word renovation may as well be a four-letter word to many in the golf industry. Renovation often brings with it a negative connotation that registers with many people as inconvenient and expensive, often leading to the closure of the golf course. While one or more of these thoughts may be included in a project, smaller renovation projects can improve your facility with minimal cost and inconvenience.



Renovating fairways to increase width is often a simple, inexpensive proposition that pays enormous dividends.

The number of golfers has declined across the world following the height of golf participation in 2005. The recent decline in participation has been attributed to the economic downturn and a change in golfing patterns. Interestingly, statistics gathered by the National Golf Foundation indicate that 260,000 women took up golf in 2013, but this number was more than offset by nearly 650,000 men who quit playing golf that same year. These numbers emphasize the importance of introducing women to golf.

There are numerous reasons cited for the decline in golfer participation. Aside from economic decline affecting disposable income, other reasons players leave the game include time, difficulty and lack of playing partners. These three reasons tie into a common theme: golf courses are too difficult.

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### ALL THINGS CONSIDERED - A USGA STAFF OPINION IT'S TIME TO COMMIT - OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY DEPENDS ON IT

Keith Happ, director, North-Central Region



By timing agronomic practices when they will be most beneficial to the turf, recovery time is reduced and long-term playing quality is achieved.

Each year during Course Consulting Service (CCS) visits, questions are posed by golfers and club officials concerning adjustments in agronomic practices and procedures with the sole intent of "not inconveniencing golf" during the season. As USGA agronomists, our first response is, "Sure, practices can be implemented in the offseason to minimize golfer inconveniences, but doing so may significantly compromise desired results." If questions pertain to a renovation project and the estimated cost per square foot is higher than expected, the response from the superintendent may be something along the lines of, "We can do it in-house or we don't have to use that method or those materials." These responses may not be what golfers want to hear, but when the focus is achieving desired playing conditions there can be only one answer regarding agronomic procedures or a renovation project. Commit to doing the procedure or project when it is best for the grass and do it right the first time.

Aeration is the No. 1 topic for these discussions. Naturally, golfers desire to schedule aeration at a time of year when it does not interfere with play. However, shifting away from the optimal aeration time when it is best for the grass will reduce the benefits of aeration and prolong recovery time. The No. 1 defense against pest pressure from weeds and disease is healthy, dense grass. Realistically, the minor inconvenience of aeration does not outweigh the long-term benefits of well-timed agronomic procedures which promote healthier turf and more consistent playing quality throughout the season. Aerating too early in the spring or too late in the fall will not achieve the same effect as performing the practice when grass is most actively growing. Golfers don't want to play when it is too cold and grass doesn't grow vigorously when it is too cold. If playing quality is the priority at your facility, then commit to providing every opportunity to achieve that goal.

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### BERMUDAGRASS WINTER INJURY ON TEES, FAIRWAYS AND ROUGH

Chris Hartwiger, director, USGA Course Consulting Service

#### Assessment and Recovery

The winter of 2013-14 had a profound effect on golf facilities across much of the country. Warm-season grasses were exposed to record low temperatures throughout the transition zone and southern U.S. While bermudagrass greens that were covered have emerged from winter in excellent condition, extensive damage to bermudagrass tees, fairways and rough has been reported. This installment in the USGA Green Section Webcast Series provides a quick technique for assessing the recuperative ability of damaged bermudagrass and details some season-long recovery considerations.



[View The Webcast](#)

### FORE THE GOLFER SEAWATER AND ITS ROLE IN GOLF COURSE TURF

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Since water is scarce, why not use sea water to irrigate golf courses? Is this even possible? Read on to learn how and where salt water can play a role in the successful management of golf courses.

### RESEARCH THAT MATTERS

#### REDUCING THE CARBON FOOTPRINT OF GOLF COURSES

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Climate change, carbon footprint and greenhouse gases are all hot topics in today's world. In 2005 the U.S. Department of Agriculture initiated the Greenhouse Gas Reduction through Agricultural Carbon Enhancement Network (GRACeNet) to develop agricultural practices that enhance carbon sequestration, promote sustainability and provide scientific support for carbon credit and trading programs. Through collaboration with the USDA, researchers at Colorado State University are evaluating golf courses following GRACeNet protocols to help develop best management practices that reduce golf's carbon footprint.

### FROM THE ARCHIVES

#### WHAT DOES GOOGLE EARTH HAVE TO DO WITH THE HISTORY OF GOLF COURSES?

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While most of us enjoy using Google Earth many users are unaware of one of the program's most useful features regarding golf course management. The next time you are using the program, click on View and select Historical Imagery. A time slider will appear allowing you to view historic aerial photos. Depending on your location, you might be able to see images from many decades earlier. As you view successive years the changes in course features are often dramatic, particularly when it comes to trees and the shape of greens and bunkers.

### REGIONAL UPDATES



#### REGIONAL UPDATES

The USGA Green Section is divided into eight regions staffed by agronomists who work with golf facilities on care of the golf course. USGA agronomists provide regular regional updates outlining current issues and observations from the field. Be sure to view updates from multiple regions as featured ideas, techniques and solutions to problems often apply to other parts of the country.



#### NORTHEAST REGION

Sometimes, the weather just refuses to cooperate. Some of the areas hardest hit by winter-injury problems are experiencing prolonged cool weather that is slowing recovery efforts. Here are a few tips to help deal with the challenges.

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#### MID-ATLANTIC REGION

In recent years, several golf courses in the Mid-Atlantic have converted areas of cool-season turf to bermudagrass, but this year's severe winter is causing some to question this practice. Don't be so quick to judge based on short-term setbacks; careful thought should be given before you reevaluate the use of bermudagrass.

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#### SOUTHEAST REGION

During recent Course Consulting Service visits, two recurring themes were observed: Covered, ultradwarf bermudagrass putting greens emerged from winter generally unscathed, but areas of bermudagrass tees, fairways and rough in the Northern Transition Zone didn't fare as well. Review the use of covers and learn how to assess and recover from damage to bermudagrass in this regional update.

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#### FLORIDA REGION

With winter winding down and warm temperatures returning, the transition back to bermudagrass is beginning to occur throughout the region. A proactive transition-management program may be just what your course needs to keep from singing the overseeding transition blues.

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#### NORTH-CENTRAL REGION

Recovery of winter-injured turf is well underway throughout southern portions of the region, while northern areas continue to wait for the weather to cooperate. However, areas of turf previously thought to be dead are slowly recovering. This series of images exhibits the importance of weather, time and sound agronomic practices when turf recovery is paramount.

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#### MID-CONTINENT REGION

Golf course superintendents are using a new and extremely effective tool to communicate better than ever - blogging. This update discusses how blogs have helped superintendents reach out to golfers and features a Mid-Continent course that does so in a highly professional manner.

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#### NORTHWEST REGION

Golfers aren't the only things popping up on courses with the return of warm weather, so are irrigation heads. To improve water-use efficiency and playing conditions at your facility, make sure you go into the season level-headed.

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#### SOUTHWEST REGION

Fire drills are commonplace in schools and office buildings, but they aren't the first thing that comes to mind on a golf course. However, when a wildfire broke out north of San Diego earlier this week, one Southern California golf course discovered the value of their well-developed, routinely practiced fire-management plan.

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- Individual updates from 8 USGA Green Section regions and the research program

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